



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
METROPOLITAN HEALTH DISTRICT



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VIOLENCE
PREVENTION

Adverse Childhood Experiences

WHAT ARE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)?

Adverse Childhood Experiences are potentially traumatic events that occur during childhood between the ages of 0-17. ACEs range from witnessing violence or a traumatic event such as suicide at home to direct contact with violence, abuse, or neglect.

Experiences like witnessing substance misuse, mental health problems, or instability due to separation or incarceration of a parent, sibling, or other household members shape a child's environment and can also affect their sense of safety, stability, and bonding.

Source: CDC "Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs): Leveraging the Best Available Evidence" (2019)

WHAT IS TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE?

Trauma Informed Care is an organizational approach that understands and responds to the life-long potential impacts of trauma in the families served. Rather than asking "What is wrong with you?", a Trauma Informed Care Approach asks, "What has happened to you?"

This approach emphasizes the physical, psychological, and emotional safety of those involved in the chain of help to help trauma survivors strengthen their resiliency, gain empowerment and thrive.

Source: The South Texas Trauma Informed Care Consortium website (www.stxtic.org)

ACES PROGRAM SUMMARY AND HISTORY

In August of 2018, the South Texas Trauma-Informed Care Consortium (STTICC) was created to mitigate the effects of ACEs by creating a Certified Trauma-Informed Bexar County. In 2019, the STTICC Leadership and the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute investigated how the universal implementation of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) approaches could improve Bexar County. The STTICC listed several benefits of standardized TIC framework used at a community-wide level:



- ▶ **Shared, consistent, uniform message across the community.** Using the same trauma language across agencies enhances collaboration and improves individuals' experience when interacting with multiple systems.
- ▶ **More efficient use of resources.** The integration of trauma-informed practices across the board will allow agencies to share the training costs and will, in the long run, decrease the time and money spent training new staff. Proper training will allow agencies to provide more effective and higher quality services, decreasing the cost of ineffective services.
- ▶ **Increased rates of recovery.** Individuals receiving services have a better chance at recovery when served with a system infrastructure that addresses trauma effectively and supports widespread TIC.

- ▶ **Reduced turnover among staff.** In line with the research, TIC benefits staff retention and satisfaction.

- ▶ **Positive impact on the overall health of the community.** Addressing trauma at a county level will positively impact the overall community's health.

As one of the largest employers in San Antonio, the City of San Antonio made a bold commitment to certify each of its 40 departments as trauma-informed, ensuring each of the 12,500 employees receive ongoing training and technical assistance. The many rolling outcomes that COVID-19 had in our community can become an opportunity to build resilience and awareness about trauma-informed strategies. This pledge ensures that the City will take this opportunity to reflect our shared commitment to this approach.

The San Antonio Fire Department and San Antonio Police Department are part of the largest first responders team in the area. They are often the first to arrive on the scene to traumatic events, which makes their individual and Department's response crucial to making San Antonio trauma-informed, supporting employees and the residents they help. Not only will this approach provide improved quality of services for San Antonio residents, but it will prove consistent with the City's leadership role as a key employer and service provider. Just like these two, every Department within the City of San Antonio engages with the community directly. This approach will improve the quality of services with a greater understanding of trauma and trauma-informed responses.



SCOPE OF THE ISSUE

ACEs surpass all barriers and adversely affect those with untreated histories of adversity and trauma, yielding consequences that stretch far beyond the socio-emotional. Disrupted neurodevelopment can appear as early as three to five-year-olds with recognizable social, emotional, and cognitive problems. Increased exposure to traumatic events and toxic stress

can lead to the risk for unhealthy behaviors, long-term negative health effects, higher dropout rates from school, and higher incarceration rates.

Texas is no stranger to ACEs and their adverse effects as it faces overall higher rates of ACEs than the national averages. In 2017, more than 63,000 children were victims of child maltreatment.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

In *Healthy People 2030* the Health and Human Services Department issued ten-year goals that included four developmental and research objectives on ACEs:

1. **IVP-D03:** Reduce the number of young adults who report three or more adverse childhood experiences.
2. **AH-D01:** Increase the proportion of trauma-informed early childcare settings and elementary and secondary schools.
3. **AH-D02:** Increase the proportion of children and adolescents with symptoms of trauma who get treatment.
4. **EMC-D07:** Increase the proportion of children and adolescents who show resilience to challenges and stress.

With these in mind, the financial investment from the City and Metro Health made the development of the Institute for Trauma-Informed Care (ITIC/UH) possible. Its existence has helped provide technical and training assistance to other organizations. In addition, it will serve as support to strengthen and assist in the following objectives:

Establish COSA Center of Excellence (COE) in Trauma-Informed Care (\$1M)

Within five years, certify every COSA Department in Level 1 Trauma-Informed Care. Through this initiative, COSA Departments

and staff will have dedicated support for policy development, training, and application.

Establish Trauma-Informed Practices in the Justice System (\$2M)

Embed Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed practices in systems serving justice-involved parents and schools identified as experiencing the highest community violence rates throughout San Antonio. Provide Triple P Parenting classes to detained parents to support family relationships after release. Enhance the availability of restorative justice practices in local public schools.

The COSA COE for Trauma-Informed Care will systematically assess the current COSA capacity to provide trauma-informed services. Over five years, every COSA department will be supported to achieve Level 1 TIC Certification or renew the TI-Certification process through the STTICC. The COSA TIC COE will serve as an advisory team to support COSA HR with policies and procedures. Additionally, the COE will develop a training program for municipal governments to become trauma-informed. The development of training/educational materials can generate revenue to reinvest in sustaining Bexar County/San Antonio Organizational TI-Certification accessibility/cost.

FUNDING SOURCES

CDC COVID-19 Health Disparities Grant

\$487,421.00

(June – September 2021)

Grant Period

6/1/2021 to 5/31/2023

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
New Personnel	ACES MA-2 Admin Asst – 2					4 Positions
Personnel	\$193,291	\$218,876	\$224,705	\$230,709	\$236,894	\$1,104,478
Total	\$213,141	\$235,126	\$242,155	\$246,959	\$254,344	\$1,191,728
Funding Secured	\$487,421 funded through CDC Grant					



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The COE will collaborate with community partners to identify useful ACEs/TIC-related data types to gather, initiating a data system for San Antonio/Bexar County.

University Health and the Ecumenical Center are core

partners in the development of the Organizational Trauma-Informed Certification. In addition, Metro Health, Voices for Children, and the Children's Shelter have been founding South Texas Trauma-Informed Care Consortium members.

SAMHD TI-CERTIFICATION IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

FY2022 Timeline

Jun - Sept	Q1: Oct - Dec	Q2: Jan - Mar	Q3: Apr - Jun	Q4: Jul - Sept
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation & Planning Invite Pilot Departments to participate in TI-Certification. Train department ACE Champions: roles, responsibilities, train the trainer. Develop E-Learning Modules (Moodle). Obtain City Manager Letter of Support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule staff training. Meet with Managers & Supervisors (TI-Certification process, expectations, meetings). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Training Begins. Ongoing meetings with ACE Champions, Managers, Supervisors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing staff training. Identify 2nd cohort for TI-Certification. Invite 2nd cohort Departments to participate in TI-Certification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review department Post assessment. Schedule site visit assessment with TI-Certifying Entity. TI-Certification

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